AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A protective helmet comprising:

a helmet shell formed from an impact-resistant material and having a top portion, a front portion, and an interior;

a shield coupled to the front portion of the shell;

an insert formed from an impact-absorbing material positioned in the interior of the helmet, the insert having at least one slot formed therein and extending through the insert;

a tube inlet coupled to a top portion of the shell, said inlet operable to be connected to a source of air, the tube inlet comprising at least one channel extending from a proximal channel end at the top portion of the shell to a distal channel end at the front portion of the shell above the shield;

wherein the distal channel end is adjacent the at least one slot; and

wherein the tube inlet, the at least one channel, and the at least one slot are constructed so that when the tube inlet is connected to the source of air, air travels downward into the tube inlet, through the at least one channel, through the at least one slot, and into the interior of the helmet.

2. (Original) The protective helmet of claim 1, wherein at least one channel comprises a plurality of channels.

3. (Original) The protective helmet of claim 1, wherein the at least one slot comprises a plurality of slots.

4. (Original) The protective helmet of claim 1, wherein the tube inlet is formed integrally with the helmet shell.

5. (Original) The protective helmet of claim 1, wherein the insert is formed from expanded bead polystyrene.

6. (Original) The protective helmet of claim 1, wherein a first number of channels is equal to a second number of slots.

7-11. (Cancelled)

12. (New) A protective helmet having an interior comprising:

a helmet shell for protectively enclosing a wearer's head, the helmet shell having a frontal hemisphere, a rear hemisphere, a top portion, and an interior, wherein said top portion extends into both the frontal and rear hemisphere and is the area of said helmet shell that protects the top of the wearer's head, wherein said frontal hemisphere is a front portion of said helmet shell that protects a wearer's face, wherein said rear hemisphere is the other portion of said helmet shell that protects the back of the wearer's head, wherein said interior is defined and enclosed by said shell;

a shield coupled to the frontal hemisphere of the shell;

an insert positioned in the interior of the shell for receiving the wearer's head, the insert having at least one channel formed therein and extending from a proximal end adjacent the top portion of the shell to a distal end generally adjacent the shield, said at least one channel enclosed within the frontal hemisphere, the insert further having at least one slot formed therein and extending through the insert, each of the at least one slots in fluid communication with a respective one of the at least one channels;

a tube inlet coupled to the top portion of the shell and in fluid communication with a portion of the at least one channel for airflow therebetween, the inlet operable to be connected to a source of air;

wherein the tube inlet, the at least one channel, and the at least one slot are constructed so that when the tube inlet is connected to the source of air, air travels downward into the tube inlet, through the at least one channel, through the at least one slot, and into the interior of the helmet.

13. The protective helmet of claim 12, wherein the at least one channel comprises a plurality of channels.

14. The protective helmet of claim 12, wherein the at least one slot comprises a plurality of slots.

15. The protective helmet of claim 12, wherein the tube inlet is formed integrally with the helmet shell.

16. The protective helmet of claim 12, wherein the insert is formed from expanded bead polystyrene.

17. The protective helmet of claim 12, wherein a first number of channels is equal to a second number of slots.